

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 AID-20 SSC-01 EB-11 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5479

INFO USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONTEVIDEO 3261

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, UY

SUBJ: THE SEARCH FOR A COUNCIL OF STATE

CINCSO FOR POLAD

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENT BORDABERRY HAS BEGUN DESIGNATIONS TO NEW COUNCIL OF STATE. ALTHOUGH HE CONTINUES TO HAVE SOME PROBLEMS IS FINDING ACCEPTABLE CANDIDATES, INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL IS EXPECTED SHORTLY.

2. PRESIDENT BORDABERRY, ON OCTOBER 26, FORMALLY OFFERED AND RECEIVED THE ACCEPTANCE OF 82-YEAR-OLD BLANCO PARTY PATRIARCH MARTIN ETCHEGOYEN TO PRESIDE OVER THE COUNCIL OF STATE. ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGEABLE EMBASSY SOURCE, ETCHEGOYEN, WHO HAS BEEN IN POOR HEALTH DURING RECENT YEARS, ACCEPTED POSITION ONLY AFTER RECEIVING ASSURANCE FROM FAMILY DOCTOR THAT HE COULD UNDERTAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

3. DURING LAST WEEK BORDABERRY AND PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY ALVARO PACHECO SERE HAVE SOUGHT TO COMPLETE LIST OF APPOINTMENTS TO COUNCIL WHICH WILL REPLACE CLOSED CONGRESS. EMBASSY OFFICER WAS TOLD BY WELL PLACED SOURCE TODAY (NOVEMBER 1) THAT EMILIO SIEMENS AMARO, RETIRED SUPREME
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COURT JUSTICE, AND JOSE ETCHEVERRY STIRLING, PRESENT

MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE, HAVE ACCEPTED APPOINTMENTS. SAME SOURCE ADVISES THAT PRESIDENT HAS ALSO ASKED MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE BENITO MEDERO TO STEP DOWN FROM CABINET IN ORDER TO ASSUME POSITION ON COUNCIL BUT MEDERO HAS NOT YET DECIDED IF HE WILL MAKE THE SWITCH. ADDITIONAL INDIVIDUALS APPROACHED BY BORDABERRY AND REPORTEDLY LEAVING TOWARD ACCEPTING POSITIONS ON THE COUNCIL INCLUDE ARCOS PEREZ, FORMER UNDERSECRETARY OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HECTOR VIANA MARTORELL, FORMER UNDER-SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE (DURING PERIOD WHEN BORDABERRY WAS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE), AND DANIEL RODRIGUEZ LARRETA, FORMER CENTRAL BANK OFFICIAL AND DIRECTOR OF NEWSPAPER "EL PAIS".

4. PRESIDENT REPORTEDLY IS HOPING TO OBTAIN AS MANY AS 25 ACCEPTANCES TO COUNCIL. HOWEVER, SINCE A NUMBER OF THOSE APPROACHED MAY NOT ACCEPT, POSSIBILITY REMAINS THAT FINAL COUNCIL NUMBER WILL BE LESS. SIGNIFICANTLY, THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENCY HAS AVOIDED MAKING ANY OFFICIAL STATEMENT ON THE EXACT NUMBER THAT WILL BE APPOINTED.

5. COMMENT: ALL REPORTS INDICATE THAT DESPITE DECISION OF ETCHEGOYEN TO JOIN COUNCIL, PRESIDENT IS STILL HAVING TROUBLE IN OBTAINING OTHER ACCEPTANCES. EFFORT TO OBTAIN YOUTHFUL REPRESENTATION ON COUNCIL HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY UNSUCCESSFUL AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN FORMALLY APPROACHED AND HAVE INDICATED ACCEPTANCE ARE LARGELY OLDER, CONSERVATIVE INDIVIDUALS. RELUCTANCE OF MANY DISTINGUISHED URUGUAYANS TO ACCEPT ALSO PROBABLY RESPONSIBLE FOR DECISION TO TRANSFER SOME MINISTERS FROM CABINET TO COUNCIL IN APPARENT EFFORT TO ASSURE AT LEAST SOME PRESTIGE TO NEW INSTITUTION. BUT THIS IN TURN COULD CREATE EQUALLY THORNY PROBLEM OF FINDING NEW, ABLE MINISTERIAL APPOINTEES.

6. IN ANY EVENT, FINAL COUNCIL DESIGNATION APPEARS NEAR. PRESIDENT, HAVING PROMISED INSTALLATION OF COUNCIL FOLLOWING OCTOBER 6-11 NIRVANA SUMMIT MEETING (REFTEL, IS COMMITTED TO EXPEDITIOUS APPOINTMENT. IN ADDITION, WITH OVER FOUR MONTHS HAVING PASSED SINCE CLOSING OF

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CONGRESS, A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT GOVERNMENTAL DECISIONS (INCLUDING AMBASSADORIAL CONFIRMATIONS, RATIFICATION OF U.S.-URUGUAYAN EXTRADITION TREATY, INDUSTRIAL INCENTIVE LAW AND, ACCORDING TO RECENT DAO REPORT POSSIBLE OUTLAWING OF COMMUNIST PARTY) ARE AWAITING COUNCIL ACTION

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